

FROM THE BOOKSHELF #160  
RHODA MAINES/IJL

SEPTEMBER 28, 1976

TRINITY: A NOVEL OF IRELAND BY LEON URIS

ANNCR: THE VOICE OF AMERICA BRINGS YOU ANOTHER IN THE WEEKLY SERIES  
... FROM THE BOOKSHELF ... A SERIES IN WHICH WE REPORT ON  
BOOKS AMERICANS ARE READING. TODAY, RHODA MAINES' REPORT ON  
TRINITY: A NOVEL OF IRELAND BY LEON URIS, PUBLISHED BY  
DOUBLEDAY & COMPANY. HERE IS BOOK EDITOR -----.

EDITOR: THE GREAT AMERICAN PLAYWRIGHT, EUGENE O'NEILL, HIMSELF OF  
IRISH STOCK, ONCE WROTE: "THERE IS NO FUTURE ... ONLY THE  
PAST HAPPENING OVER AND OVER..." LEON URIS QUOTES O'NEILL'S  
POIGNANT REMARK IN HIS NOVEL "TRINITY."

IRELAND, THAT TRAGIC, LOVELY LAND IS A PAGE-ONE STORY  
MUCH OF THE TIME, AND BY WAY OF EXPLORING ITS TROUBLES, LEON  
URIS HAS WRITTEN A PANORAMIC NOVEL THAT TAKES US FROM THE  
TIME OF THE GREAT FAMINE OF THE 1840S TO THE EVE OF THE  
EASTER REBELLION IN 1916. HE TELLS THE STORY OF THREE  
FAMILIES WHICH SYMBOLIZE THE TRINITY OF PEOPLES THAT HAVE  
SHAPED THE IRISH REALITY.

THE CATHOLICS ARE REPRESENTED BY THE LARKIN CLAN OF  
BALLYUTOGUE (BALLY-U-TOG). THEY ARE HILL-FARMERS WHO HAVE  
EKED OUT A BARE SUBSISTENCE IN COUNTY DONEGAL FOR GENERATIONS.  
RANGED AGAINST THEM IS THE POWERFUL HUBBLE DYNASTY, BRITISH  
ARISTOCRACY WHICH HAS DOMINATED THE AREA FOR THREE CENTURIES.  
THE IRISH PROTESTANTS ARE SYMBOLIZED BY THE MACLEODS  
(MUKLOUD) OF BELFAST. THEY ARE SHIPYARD WORKERS WHOSE  
SCOTTISH PRESBYTERIAN FOREBEARS WERE PLANTED IN ULSTER BY

EDITOR: (CONT'D) THE BRITISH TO SOLIDIFY THE POWER OF THE CROWN. THEY SIDE WITH THE ARISTOCRACY AGAINST THE CATHOLICS. THE FAMILIES ARE FICTIONAL BUT THE HISTORY IS REAL. TRACING THE INTERRELATED LIVES OF THESE THREE FAMILIES, LEON URIS INSTRUCTS AS HE ENTERTAINS. THE CONFLICT IS OVER OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL OF THE LAND.

THE CATHOLIC LARKINS ARE PEOPLE OF THE LAND. THEY WORSHIP IT. THEY ARE IMPRISONED BY IT. THEY KNOW THAT THE LAND HAS BETRAYED THEM AND MAY DO IT AGAIN. THE MAIN CHARACTER, CONOR LARKIN, HAS OFTEN HEARD THE STORY OF THE GREAT HUNGER OF THE 1840S, WHEN THE POTATO CROP FAILED AND LARKIN CLAN MEMBERS DIED OF STARVATION WITH THE REST. / THE MEMORIES ARE

BITTER:

VOICE: "ONE BY ONE, YOUR DADDY WATCHED HIS SISTER AND BROTHERS AND HIS MOTHER DIE AND PUT THEM UNDER WITH HIS OWN HAND. ALL OF THEM DIED WITH GREEN MOUTHS LIKE SO MANY OF OUR PEOPLE DID. GREEN MOUTHS FROM EATING GRASS.."

EDITOR: THE TRAGIC ACCOUNT PROCEEDS. IRELAND AND THE IRISH CAME CLOSE TO EXTINCTION IN THAT TERRIBLE TIME. HEAR THIS PASSAGE FROM "TRINITY."

VOICE: "THE DOOR TO ENGLAND WAS SHUT IN IRISH FACES. IN THE FIFTH YEAR OF THE GREAT HUNGER IRELAND HAD BEEN DECIMATED BY A MILLION DEATHS FROM STARVATION AND DISEASE AND YET ANOTHER MILLION BY EMIGRATION. THOSE FORTUNATES WHO REACHED AMERICA KEPT THOSE IN IRELAND EXISTING..."

EDITOR: THE TWO MOST POWERFUL INSTITUTIONS IN THE COMMUNITY OF BALLYUTOGUE ARE ST. COLUMBA'S CHURCH AND DOOLEY MCCLUSKEY'S PUBLIC HOUSE. CONOR'S FATHER, TOMAS, IS A REGULAR CUSTOMER AT MCCLUSKEY'S. HE IS THE ONE PROSPEROUS CATHOLIC MERCHANT IN THE TOWNSHIP. CONOR'S MOTHER, FINOLA, LIVES OUT HER DAYS IN SUPERSTITION AND FEAR OF THE PRIESTS. THEIR AWESOME POWER INCLUDES PRIESTLY INFALLIBILITY AND, THROUGH CONFESSION, KNOWLEDGE OF THE PARISHIONERS' MOST PRIVATE THOUGHTS. AND, LIKE THE RULING ENGLISH BARONS, THEY, TOO, LIVED IN WEALTH AND COMFORT ALONGSIDE THE POVERTY OF THE PEASANTS.

THE ENGLISH ARISTOCRACY IS REPRESENTED BY THE EARL OF FOYLE, LORD ROGER HUBLE. HE IS THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL LEADER OF THE LANDED GENTRY OF LONDONDERRY. THROUGH A CYNICAL ALLIANCE, SEALED IN MARRIAGE, HIS EMPIRE INCREASES TO INCLUDE BELFAST SHIPYARDS, LINEN MILLS, AND THE ENTIRE ULSTER RAILROAD NETWORK. HUBLE'S FORTUNE COMES FROM LAND SEIZURES AND HIS EXPLOITATION OF CHILD AND FEMALE LABOR. [ HE EXPRESSES HIS CALLOUS ARROGANCE THIS WAY:

VOICE: "AT BEST THE IRISH ARE A QUAIANT FOLK, A LYING, LAZY, IGNORANT, DRUNKEN INGRATE RACE, CERTAINLY UNWORTHY OF LIFE ON THE PLANE OF A CIVILIZED ENGLISHMAN TO WHOM THEY ARE DISLOYAL ... THEY DESPOIL THE LAND WITH THEIR IGNORANCE AND BREEDING HABITS AND THEY FORFEIT OUR MERCY BY THEIR REJECTION OF GOD AND THE QUEEN."

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EDITOR: THE EARL'S AGENTS USE THE CATHOLIC HIERARCHY TO KEEP THE BULK OF THE POPULATION IGNORANT AND FEARFUL TO THE POINT WHERE THEY ACCEPT PAIN AND INJUSTICE AS PENANCE TO BE REWARDED ONLY AFTER DEATH. THEY MAINTAIN POWER BY KEEPING PROTESTANT AND CATHOLIC WORKING CLASSES AT EACH OTHER'S THROATS. . THE TWO SECTS ARE HISTORICALLY OIL AND WATER THAT CAN NEVER MIX.

GRADUALLY, THE REVOLUTIONARY SPIRIT IN CONOR LARKIN CRYSTALIZES. THE EPOCHAL LEGENDS AND FOLKLORE HE HAS BEEN BROUGHT UP ON KINDLE DREAMS OF A BETTER LIFE. THE IDEALS OF THE REPUBLICAN CAUSE AND ITS HEROES IN THE FORBIDDEN INSURRECTIONIST LITERATURE BECOME HIS MODELS AND MAKE HIM AWARE OF THE INJUSTICE ALL AROUND HIM. HE REJECTS THE TRADITIONAL LIFE OF HIS FARMER FATHER. INEVITABLY, HE JOINS THE IRISH REPUBLICAN BROTHERHOOD, LATER TO BECOME THE I.R.A., AND SUBSCRIBES TO THEIR CREED:

VOICE: "...THERE IS ONLY ONE THING LORD HUBLE AND THE CROWN  
UNDERSTAND...WITHHOLD HIS RENTS...RUSTLE (STEAL) HIS CATTLE  
...ASSASSINATE HIS MEN...BOYCOTT HIS FIELDS WHEN HE NEEDS  
OUR LABOR. BUT DON'T GET YOURSELF INTO HIS PARLOR AND  
TRY TO PLAY HIS PARLOR GAMES. IT WILL NEVER BE HIS LAWS  
THAT MAKE OUR LIFE BEARABLE, BUT OUR TIME-HONORED METHODS."

EDITOR: BY INTRIGUE, CONOR BECOMES AN IRONWORKER IN THE PROTESTANT-CONTROLLED SHIPYARDS. THERE HE MAKES FRIENDS WITH MORGAN MACLEOD, A SOCIALLY PROMINENT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH LEADER

EDITOR: INFLUENTIAL IN THE BELFAST SHIPBUILDING INDUSTRY. IN THE  
"CONT'D) 18TH CENTURY THE SCOTCH PRESBYTERIAN IMMIGRANTS HAD  
SYMPATHIZED WITH THE CATHOLICS' PLIGHT, BUT THIS HAS  
CHANGED. LAND WARS WITH THE CATHOLICS HAVE BROUGHT THE  
PROTESTANTS INTO THE CROWN'S CAMP. THEY ARE THE THIRD ARM  
OF LEON URIS'S "TRINITY." MORGAN'S DAUGHTER, SHELLEY, AND  
CONOR FALL IN LOVE. THIS BRINGS DISGRACE AND OSTRACISM TO  
THE MACLEOD FAMILY. SHELLEY DIES VIOLENTLY.

IN THE MEANTIME, CONOR HAS SET UP AN ARMS-SMUGGLING OPERATION  
FOR THE BROTHERHOOD. LIKE SO MANY OF HIS CLASS, HE IS  
CAUGHT, THROWN IN PRISON AND TORTURED. HE ESCAPES TO  
LIVE THE REST OF HIS SHORT LIFE IN THE TWILIGHT WORLD OF  
SEEDY ROOMS AND MIDNIGHT MEETINGS.

IN THE END, CONOR IS MARTYRED.

"TRINITY" IS A POWERFUL BOOK. AS ONE REVIEWER OF TRINITY  
PUTS IT: "WHEN THE STORY IS FINISHED, THE READER HAS BEEN  
TO PLACES WHERE HE OR SHE HAS NEVER BEEN BEFORE. THE NEWS  
ITEMS FROM BELFAST WILL NEVER SEEM QUITE THE SAME AGAIN..."

ANNCR: YOU HAVE BEEN LISTENING TO A REPORT ON TRINITY: A NOVEL OF  
IRELAND BY LEON URIS. AND NOW AN INVITATION TO JOIN US  
NEXT WEEK (AT THE SAME TIME) WHEN THE VOICE OF AMERICA  
BRINGS YOU ANOTHER DISCUSSION OF ONE OF THE MANY BOOKS  
AMERICANS ARE CHOOSING FROM THE BOOKSHELF.

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